

Cooper Landing Safe Trails

Research on states that have regulations around trapping signage
April 2025

Here is a list of states and regions with rules around trapping and trapping signage, including links to the information. Note the extent of those regulations can vary greatly, especially when it comes to specific signage requirements for public safety near trails. It seems surprising and concerning that there so few states with clear trapping signage regulations...

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Federal Lands)

- **Regulation:** On National Wildlife Refuges, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requires that appropriate warning signs be posted at main entrances or commonly used access points to areas where foot-hold traps, snares, or body-grip traps are in use.
- **Reference:** [Wildlife Services Directive - USDA APHISAPHIS](#)

Trapping Regulations and Signage in the US: States and regions where trapping is regulated, with a focus on **signage** and **public safety**.

1. Alaska

- **Trapping in Proximity to Trails and Roads:**
 - Alaska has regulations that limit trapping near **public lands**, including some trails. However, specific **signage requirements** are inconsistent and may not be enforced across all areas.
 - **Matanuska-Susitna Borough** (Mat-Su) requires signage for trapping near trails (within 50 yards). Violators can be fined.
 - **Alaska Division of Wildlife:** In some cases, trappers are required to post signage in areas where **public safety** is at risk (e.g., near recreational trails or urban areas). This is generally considered a **best practice**, but enforcement can vary.
 - *Reference:* [Alaska Wildlife News](#)

2. Oregon

- **Signage and Safety in Wildlife Areas:**
 - Oregon mandates that **trapping activities** on certain **public lands** require **signage** to warn the public, especially in areas of high human traffic.
 - **Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)** ensures that trappers post warnings in areas where trapping is allowed close to trails.
 - *Reference:* [ODFW Trapping Regulations](#)

3. New York

- **Trapping Regulations:**

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- New York has **buffer zone requirements**, and in some public areas, like near **recreational trails**, trappers must **post signs** to notify the public of active traps.
 - **100 feet buffer** rule for **body-gripping traps** near trails in certain areas.
 - *Reference:* [NY Department of Environmental Conservation \(DEC\)](#)
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4. Florida

- **National Forests:**

- In areas like the **Ocala National Forest**, **trapping** is subject to regulations that require **clear signage** to indicate where activities are occurring and to protect the public from danger.
 - *Reference:* [Florida Department of Wildlife](#)
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5. Idaho

- **Public Safety Signage:**

- In Idaho, **trappers are required** to put up **warning signs** at trailheads or near active trapping zones on **public lands**. The state has been facing criticism for insufficient regulations regarding **trapping safety** and has been reviewing better practices for signage.
 - Traps must be set with adequate **warnings** for hikers and pet owners in high-traffic areas.
 - *Reference:* [Idaho Fish and Game](#)
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6. Montana

- **Trapping Regulations:**

- **Montana** has some of the strictest trapping rules, especially regarding **signage** near **public lands** and popular trails. Trappers are required to **post clear, visible warnings** when setting traps near recreational trails.
- *Reference:* [Montana FWP Regulations](#)
- **Proposed Legislation:** A bill (House Bill 436) was introduced to require trappers to post signs near trailheads and trails on Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) land to warn other users that trapping is occurring. 13 proponents backed the bill, including representatives of Footloose Montana, Trap Free Montana, Bold Visions, and the **Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers**.
- **Status:** As of the latest information, the bill had not passed but reflects ongoing efforts to enhance public awareness.
- **Reference:** [Missoula legislator reintroduces trapping signage bill - KPAXKPAX News](#)

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7. California

- **Proximity Restrictions:**

- **California** requires signage near **trapping areas** on **public lands** like state parks and forests, especially in areas frequented by outdoor enthusiasts.
 - Additionally, some **wildlife management areas** (WMAs) require trapper registration and **public warnings** to ensure safety.
 - *Reference:* [California Department of Fish and Wildlife](#)
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8. Washington

- **Buffer Zones and Signage:**

- Washington has buffer zone laws that keep traps away from trails, and signage is required in certain public-use areas to notify the public of active trapping.
 - *Reference:* [Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife](#)
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9. Colorado

- **Signage in Popular Areas:**

- Colorado requires signage to be posted in areas with **high foot traffic** or where animals and pets may be at risk from traps, particularly on public lands and near recreational trails.
 - *Reference:* [Colorado Parks and Wildlife](#)
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10. Wyoming

- **Public Safety Signage:**

- In Wyoming, when trapping is permitted near trails, **trappers must post signs** in areas where there is a risk to people or animals.
 - *Reference:* [Wyoming Game and Fish Department](#)
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11. Oklahoma

- **Regulation:** On lands where smooth-jawed double-spring offset traps are used, posting signs at all entrances from public roads and highways is mandatory.
- **Exemption:** This requirement does not apply if the person is trapping on property they own or lease.
- **Reference:** [Oklahoma Statutes §29-5-502 \(2020\)](#)

File Code: 1500; 2630

Date: April 29, 2025

Alaska Board of Game
Boards Support Section
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, Alaska 99811-5526

Dear Alaska Board of Game,

The United States Forest Service-Chugach National Forest would like to submit the following comments in support of Proposals submitted by the Cooper Landing Safe Trails Committee to establish trapping setbacks from heavily used recreation areas and to require signs be posted at all active trapping access points in Unit 7.

Year-round outdoor recreation is an important and growing segment of the Cooper Landing area's economy. As the amount of winter recreation has increased over the past 20 years, so has the number of encounters between user groups and traps set in recreational areas. Many of these areas occur on Forest Service lands.

The proposals include 100-yard setbacks from the most popular and heavily used multi-use trails, campgrounds, roads, pullouts, and beaches that are in the Cooper Landing area as well as areas of the Summit Lake Recreation Area. Trapping setbacks would establish safe zones for user groups accessing these areas for: cross-country skiing, backcountry skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, ice fishing, hiking, fat tire biking, dog mushing, snow machining, bird hunting, cabin rentals, and more.

The Forest Service strives to fairly manage the land for all uses balancing commercial, recreational, personal, and subsistence uses across our public lands. Our National Forest is multi-use and balancing those uses at times becomes difficult with opposing views and this issue is one of those that all parties have the right to continue using the Forest for their needs. The goal of these proposals is to establish safe corridors for recreation users with their families and pets, while still allowing trapping beyond a modest buffer.



For the reasons mentioned above, Chugach NF supports establishing effective regulatory measures including trapping setbacks and signs posted at all access points of active trapping along high use trails and recreation areas in Unit 7.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the Chugach NF comments on this proposal. If there are questions, please contact me at 907-288-7730 or by e-mail at ruth.damico@usda.gov.

Sincerely,

RUTH L. D'AMICO
District Ranger